

Hebrews 13:1-6

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Paul gives specific examples of how believers ought to be living in order to please God.

In these verses, Paul gives specific instructions of ways these Hebrew believers should be living in order to please God. Paul's first instruction is to *let brotherly love continue*. Continue implies that these believers were already displaying brotherly love; as Paul noted earlier in his letter, they had already suffered hardship and partnered with those experiencing suffering, a great example of true brotherly love (Hebrews 10:32-34). In order to avoid the temptation to not endure until the end or finish what we have started ("teleo"), it is important to not forsake coming together as believers (Hebrews 10:25) in order to encourage and minister to each other. Caring and loving other believers is encouraging and keeps us walking in obedience and faithfulness to God.

Paul's second instruction is to *show hospitality to strangers*. In Genesis 18:1-16 Abraham and Sarah literally hosted (*entertained*) *angels* in their home *without knowing it*. During the early spread of Christianity, mission work was particularly important and travel and lodging were not as simple as they are in our time. Showing hospitality to those who need it and to those who are doing the work of spreading the gospel was necessary. The Greek word here translated hospitality also occurs in Romans 12:13 which says, "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice Hospitality." As believers we are called to be hospitable even to those we do not know, which is a true demonstration of the love of Christ.

Next, Paul reminds these believers of those that are in prison or being mistreated for spreading the gospel. According to Hebrews 10, this is something this group knew about firsthand. Since we are all in the body of Christ and those who suffer for Christ are not distant from us, it is as though we were suffering *in prison with them*. We should remember them, pray for them, and minister to them when we can.

We know that in some cases people had looked unfavorably on marriage and even forbidden it (1 Timothy 4:3). Paul assures his readers that it is an honorable thing and should be regarded as such by all. Secondly,

the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*. God intended sex to occur only within marriage between a man and wife. *Fornicators and adulterers* who practice sex outside of marriage will be judged by God. And sex within marriage is something completely untainted.

Paul warns the Hebrews against the *love of money*. Instead, we should be *content with what [we] have*. Becoming rich in possessions or money is not the goal of the Christian life, rather, we should be content in any circumstance (Philippians 4:13). Paul refers back to Deuteronomy 31:6 to say that God will never leave us nor forsake us. Whether we are rich or poor in this life, we know that believers have the greatest possession available, Christ as our high priest. *The Lord* is our *helper* and we do not need to be afraid of what man can do to us, or of losing our possessions (Psalms 118:6).

Biblical Text:

Let love of the brethren continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³ Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body. ⁴ Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. ⁵ *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"* ⁶ so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"